(b) As per information available from Government of Orissa, cashew plantations in 188 patches covering 0.135 lakh hectares have been damaged in the cyclone affected areas.

(c) An amount of Rs. 28.00 crores is stated to be required for replantation in the damaged area.

(d) and (e) Central Government have released the following amounts to the State Government in the wake of cyclone for undertaking relief operations including restoration and development of cashew plantation in the State:

(i) Rs. 42.50 crores from Central Share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF).

(ii) Ad-hoc assistance of Rs. 500 crores from the National Fund for Calamity Relief.

(iii) Advance Release of Rs. 450 crores as plan assistance.

Transfer of Farm and Essential Items Under OGL

1834. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that basic farm and essential items are being transferred to the free list of imports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when they will be brought under OGL;

(d) what will be the impact on the local market; and

(e) what steps are being taken to protect to local manufacturers and farmers in the country from free imports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (e) In view of India's International Commitments, import restrictions on all the items being maintained on account of balance of payment reasons are to be removed latest by 31.03.2001. Some of the items in this category include Agricultural products also. The list of all the 1429 tariff lines on which restrictions are likely to be removed by 31.03.2001 is available in the Parliament Library.

All such imports will be subject to applicable rates of customs duty and provisions of all national laws for the time being in force. This should provide adequate protection to the local manufacturers and farmers. The future impact

of this policy measure on the local market may immediately not be known. However, the government constantly monitors the situation and import duties on agricultural products are adjusted accordingly, so that domestic manufacturers and farmers are not seriously affected.

Trade with Netherland

1835. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to expand bilateral trade with Netherland;

(b) if so, the new areas identified therefor; and

(c) the details of the steps taken to promote Indo-Netherland bilateral trade?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the recent visit of Netherlands Minister for Trade (Mr. Gerrit Ybema) the two sides exchanged views for stepping up bilateral trade and economic co-operation. The Indian side sought increased investment from Netherland in areas such as agro processing, energy, pollution control, horticulture, floriculture, bio-technology, computer software, chemicals, infrastructure, etc.

(c) The steps taken to promote Indo-Netherlands trade include liberalisation of trade and investment climate in the country, putting in place bilateral framework agreements for avoidance of double taxation and promotion and protection of mutual investments, exchange of delegations, etc.

Import and export of cotton

†1836. DR. D. MASTHAN:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cotton has been imported as well as exported during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.